

**Remarks by H.E. Charles English,
United States Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina
July 11, 2008, Potočari, Srebrenica**

President Silajdžić, President Komšić, Eminences, Mayor Malkić,
Excellencies,

But most of all, people of Srebrenica, of Bratunac, of Vlasenica, of Žepa, of
Milići, of Zvornik, of Rogatica, of Višegrad

And of all the communities so profoundly affected by the terrible tragedy we
are here to commemorate...

As the representative of the United States of America, I am deeply honored
to have been asked to speak to you today.

But as a man, I am humbled by the heavy task of addressing so heinous a
crime and so profound a grief.

Nowhere else, and at no time before, have I so intensely felt the futility of
words.

Standing where genocide was committed 13 years ago, before you who were
most profoundly effected by tragedy, brings me to the limits of language.

Words fail here.

But there is one word, and only one word, that can describe what occurred in
and around Srebrenica in July 1995. That word is genocide.

Genocide occurred here.

That fact cannot be minimized, it cannot be evaded and it cannot be denied.

For some, this is a difficult fact to accept.

But no one has the right to compound the crime by evading their
responsibility for addressing its consequences or by denying it occurred.

To do so would be an insult to the memories of those who lay here, to their families, and to those who honor them.

Among all the horrible crimes committed during the war, this crime, more than any other, has haunted Bosnians and the international community alike.

This great crime calls out for justice.

There must be no pause in the pursuit of justice.

The scale and immensity of the crime demand it, and the path to reconciliation requires it.

This great crime calls out for a response.

It creates responsibilities for all of us to the victims and survivors.

All of us share those responsibilities: those of us present here today, those who are absent and those who will come here in the future.

All who could not and did not stop the crime,

all of us,

we must all acknowledge that crime.

We must ensure that justice is served, we must honor the dead, comfort the living and foster the rebirth of hope.

The leaders of this country must respond by building a better future for the people of Srebrenica and the surrounding municipalities.

They have a responsibility not to exploit the genocide for narrow purposes.

They have a responsibility not to manipulate the memory of those buried here or those who survive them.

The guilt for what happened here belongs to the criminals who planned and perpetrated the genocide.

It is not collective.

But do not confuse guilt with responsibility.

The past imposes responsibilities on the current political leadership, which they cannot avoid or shirk.

They are not exempt from this responsibility merely because they did not commit the crime.

Today's leadership must acknowledge the genocide, help bring its perpetrators to justice, and earnestly work towards reconciliation.

This ground, sacred for what it represents and for what it holds, contains a world of suffering.

And I would like to invite the world to come here, to this site which holds a sorrow that the whole world should feel.

If you come here you cannot help but invest your soul in the sorrow, to understand, to make this memorial your own and to take from here a lesson.

Only in remembering can we prevent this tragedy from happening again.

And I say to all throughout the world:

come,

see,

feel,

weep,

and act.

May God embrace the souls of the departed, and comfort the sufferings of those left behind.

Thank you.